

BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
AND TECHNOLOGICAL AFFAIRS

July 14, 1970

Mr. Boyd Gibbons
Secretary to the Council
on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Gibbons:

In response to Mr. Train's request enclosed is
a resume of significant environmental activities of
the Department of State during the past year.

Sincerely yours,

William C. Salmon
Acting Deputy Director
Office of Environmental Affairs

Enclosure:

Principal Activities of the
Department of State in the
Environmental Field (2)

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SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

Activities of the Department of State
in the
Environmental Field

Even prior to the present intense concern with environmental matters, the Department of State had been involved with activities concerning the human environment in two ways (1) in relation to U.S. foreign policy objectives and (2) in relation to domestic goals. The first concerns primarily policies, programs and activities, whether initiated by the U.S. or other governments, dealing with environmental problems which can best be solved internationally (e.g., ocean pollution), while the second relates mainly to programs and activities which various U.S. Government agencies undertake in pursuance of domestic goals but in cooperation with foreign governments and/or international organizations. The aim of such cooperation is to take advantage of the benefits that can accrue from joint research and sharing of information. These two aspects of the Department's involvement in environmental matters are often inter-related, and indeed in both cases the Department carries on its responsibilities in association with other agencies of the Government, the agencies with policy, funding and/or substantive responsibilities in the environmental field.

President Nixon, recognizing the complexity of the environmental problems and the need for international cooperation in solving them, devoted a portion of his major message on U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's to the subject. He noted that environmental problems are secondary effects of technological change, stressing that "industrial nations share no challenge more urgent than that of bringing 20th Century man and his environment to terms with one another ... Cooperative research, technological exchange, education, institution building and international regulatory agreements are all required to reverse the trend toward pollution of our planet's environment within this critical decade."

To better enable the Department to meet the challenge which the increasing preoccupation with environmental problems in the international arena places upon it, the Secretary of State established in January 1970 an Office of Environmental Affairs within the Department's Bureau of International Scientific and Technological Affairs. The new office is assigned the responsibility for providing leadership within the United States Government on international environmental matters including: (1) formulating policies and initiatives,

(2) assuring that the international programs and activities of the other agencies of the Government are consonant with these policies, and (3) providing support, in concert with other areas of the Department, for international meetings and intergovernmental organizational activities.

In addition, Secretary Rogers personally requested all U.S. Ambassadors overseas to take note of the President's strong desire to cooperate with other countries in maintaining and improving the quality of our environment and that they be alert for possible foreign policy initiatives in this field.

While foreign policy considerations are present to varying degrees in the international cooperative programs or activities undertaken by the U.S. Government in the environmental field in pursuance of domestic goals, they are paramount in programs or activities carried on by multilateral organizations, e.g., NATO, OECD and the United Nations, its specialized agencies and regional commissions. They are also of primary importance in activities, whether undertaken through multilateral organizations or bilaterally, requiring international action for effective results, as for example, the control of pollution resulting from aircraft in international commerce and from shipping on the high seas and on other international waterways. It is in these organizations and areas that most of the Department's efforts in the environmental field have been concentrated. In dealing with these organizations, the Office of Environmental Affairs works closely with the Bureau of International Organizations and other appropriate bureaus and offices of the Department.

In concert with the Office of Science and Technology of the Executive Office of the President, the Department has played a leading role in initiating and stimulating activities in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in areas concerned with the environment. This organization has had special groups and panels working on air management research, water management research, urban management, and the long term effects of persistent pesticides and their implications. It is of interest to note in this connection that the Water Management Research Group has in the past year prepared a Confrontation Exercise on integrated water resources management which is to take place at meetings in the United States and Canada, July 15 - 25, 1970.

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The Department has also provided leadership on behalf of the U.S. in the preparatory sessions for the Conference on Environment scheduled for May 1971 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, under the aegis of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). This Conference will be the first major forum in which industrialized countries of differing social, economic and political systems will consider together the degradation of national and international environment. The United States regards ECE as the principal framework for multilateral East-West cooperation on environmental matters, and hopes that the nations at the Conference will agree on a positive, action-oriented ECE environmental program.

Following the ECE Conference on Environment, which will concentrate on questions particularly relevant to the developed regions of the world (Europe and North America), there will be a United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972 which will be addressed to environmental questions of concern to the developing as well as developed countries. The Conference will concentrate on three major subjects: (1) environmental problems arising from population growth and distribution, (2) use, development and conservation of natural resources with due attention given to minimizing environmental degradation, and (3) identification of areas where pollution control can best be achieved through international action and promotion of internationally accepted criteria, standards and monitoring. The Department views this Conference as a most important international activity in this field, the forum for presenting global environmental action programs.

As one of many steps in preparing for United States participation in this United Nations Conference, the Department is co-sponsoring with other federal agencies a study under the guidance of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on the "Global Climatic and Ecological Effects of Pollution on the Atmosphere-Ocean System." The MIT project is a major interdisciplinary attempt by a group of scientists to provide a comprehensive in-depth analysis of key problems which the Conference may have to consider in dealing with the subjects on its agenda. The United States is seeking action-oriented proposals to advance at that Conference.

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One of the most effective moves that have been made so far in bringing our growing concern with the environmental problems to world-wide attention was President Nixon's address to NATO in February 1969 and his proposal in April 1969 for the establishment of a NATO Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society. The Department has played a key role in discussions and negotiations supporting the activities of the new NATO Committee. This Committee is designed to consider specific problems of the human environment with the deliberate objective of stimulating action by member governments. It has already underway eight separate pilot studies, in five of which two or more of the member countries collaborate. The studies are on (1) disaster assistance (U.S. and Italy), (2) air pollution (U.S., Turkey and Germany), (3) road safety (U.S. and Germany), (4) open-water pollution (Belgium, Portugal, Canada and France), (5) inland-water pollution (Canada, France, U.S. and Belgium), (6) scientific knowledge and decision-making (Germany), (7) motivation in a modern industrial society (United Kingdom), and (8) environment in the strategy of regional development (France).

The Department's role in efforts designed to promote domestic goals through international collaboration is mainly that of coordination and assistance to the U.S. agencies in dealing with foreign governments. In addition, the Department is instrumental in stimulating programs where it believes that such collaboration would also have significant payoff in terms of U.S. foreign policy objectives. The U.S.-Japan Natural Resources Program, the U.S.-German Cooperative Program in Natural Resources, Environmental Pollution Control, and Urban Development, and the Franco-American Scientific and Technical Cooperation Program are cases in point.

The U.S.-Japan Natural Resources Program provides for the exchange of scientific and technological information which will be mutually beneficial to the economies and welfare of both countries. A principal aim of the program, however, is also to increase bonds of understanding between the U.S. and Japan. Several of the subjects included in the program relate to the environment, as, for example, air pollution, water pollution, toxic micro-organisms, wind and seismic damage, and undersea technology. Panels of U.S. and Japanese experts have been formed to concentrate on each of the subject areas. In 1969 a dozen panels

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covering various aspects of these subjects met to exchange ideas and plan for future sessions and studies. On the U.S. side, the program is steered, at the request of the Department, by the Department of Interior, but the participants include nine agencies of the U.S. Government.

Under the U.S.-German Cooperative Program there are now several individual bilateral panels in operation. Among these are panels on coal dust, water pollution, air pollution control, urban planning and noise abatement. The first three of these panels were particularly active in the past year. In the air pollution field several areas of mutual interest for cooperation between HEW and the West German Ministry of Interior were delineated. The U.S. participants in the panel on coal dust, which is concerned with the treatment and prevention of diseases arising from coal dust, include Interior and HEW. On the water pollution panel, which concentrates on six areas (eutrophication, sludge, instrumentation, waste treatment, data processing, and legislation, administration and enforcement), the U.S. is represented by Interior.

The Franco-American Scientific and Technical Program is to a large extent still in the formative stage. In the past year, a number of French and U.S. officials have met to discuss specific cooperative projects in a variety of fields, including urban development, environmental pollution, marine science, meteorology and others. To provide high level coordination of the program, the State Department appointed Dr. Allen Astin, former Director of the National Bureau of Standards, to serve as a counterpart of the French officials responsible for coordinating the program within the French Government. In the areas of particular relevance to the environmental problem, considerable progress has been made toward reaching agreement on cooperation in urban planning. The French are planning an experimental pollution-free city in North-western France and they have invited the U.S. to participate fully in this undertaking. The areas under consideration for cooperation are: the central planning effort, city planning, air pollution, water pollution, traffic noise, urban sociology, urban transportation, economic planning and waste disposal. The U.S. "lead agency" in this cooperation is the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The other participating agencies include Commerce, Interior, HEW and DOT.

In dealing with many aspects of environment problems, there are genuine advantages in international cooperation, and in the coming years there will be rapid growth in the need for such cooperation. The Department anticipates playing an active role in these efforts.

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